

Growing Microenterprises in One-Stops

**NEtwork '04: One Stops – Building Economic
Opportunity thru Workforce Investment**

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Growing Microenterprises

CareerCenter Objectives:

- **Capacity Building within Maine Department of Labor (CareerCenters)**
- **Defining and cultivating CareerCenter relationship to other microenterprise initiatives**
- **Lessons Learned from demonstration projects translate into policy objectives**
- **Achieving sustainability**

Description

- **What is a “microenterprise”?**
 - *A commercial enterprise: a) with 5 or < employers, 1 or more of whom own the enterprise; and b) that has capital needs of under \$35,000*

Characteristics of a microenterprise.

- Business owners are diverse
- Technical assistance is important
- 1/3 may borrow start-up capital
- Businesses are small, but can grow
- Businesses contribute to family income
- Owners motivated by independence

Microentrepreneurs --

- May have little or no hard equity
- May be unfamiliar with language of business
- May be entrepreneurs of necessity
- May have industry or trade skills

Building Capacity:

- **Starting Point:**
 - Microenterprise Training and Technical Assistance (METTA)
 - MicroEnterprise Resource Development Project (MERD)
- **Partnership contributions and relationships**
 - MCWWC
 - CEI
 - MSBDC
 - Others....

Building Capacity

- **Self-employment Services *prior* to capacity building grants**

Building Capacity:

- **Scope of METTA (1994 - 1997)**
 - 1 of 5 demonstrations awarded by USDOL
 - Primary Focus – capacity building and participant services
 - Recruit and train minimum of 20 staff
 - Recruit and train 50 entrepreneurs
 - Identify approximately 25 business starts
 - Assist with financing of up to 10 businesses

Building Capacity:

- **The primary purpose of METTA:**
 - Train CareerCenter staff to help low-income people move towards financial self-sufficiency through self-employment.
 - Establish Self-employment/small business Information and Resource Library at Career Centers
 - Build an integrated Information and Referral System among the business assistance community
 - Provide services to low-income entrepreneurs utilizing existing organizations.

Building Capacity:

- **Focus of MERD (1997-1999)**
 - Expand to *statewide* capacity
 - Primary Focus continue – capacity building and participant services
 - Recruit and train 2000 entrepreneurs from Dislocated Worker population
 - Establish regional networks.

Lessons Learned:

Key Factors for Integrating MicroEnterprise Services

→ Partnership worked together to:

- Create organizational change
- Build resources and ensure access to services
- Establish a track record of successful service delivery and self-employment outcomes.

→ Roles and Responsibilities – do what we do best

- Sustainability
- Champions
- Leadership support
- Resources
- Success stories
- Outcome data

Lessons: Roles & Responsibilities

→ – do what we do best:

**CareerCenters provide support,
access to information, training, and
career options for workers in
transition**

Lessons : Sustainability

- **Champions**
- **Leadership support**
- **Resources**
- **Success stories**
- **Outcome data**

Staying in the Game:

DoL/CareerCenters role in statewide entrepreneurship development in Maine...

→ **Maine Enterprise Options (MEO)**

→ **The doorway – based in legislation**

→ **Builds partnerships**

→ **Reinforces identity of CareerCenters as place to go for self-employment assistance**

Staying in the Game

→ Commitment to partnerships – staying at the table

- Entrepreneurship Working Group
- Project KEEP
- MicroNet
- Project GATE
- Maine LEADS